



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Ḫóip do Dhia aḅ pna háipuib, agur ríodcáin air an bealam beagtoil do na dáoinib.

Luce ii. 14.

PUBLISHED THE MIDDLE OF EVERY MONTH, AT 9, UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET, DUBLIN.

Vol. IV.—No. 48.

DECEMBER 15, 1855.

Annual Subscription, 2s. 6d.; Unstamped Copies, 3d. each. Payable in Advance.

CONTENTS:

	Page.
Savonarola	133
The History of Purgatory, (continued from page 59)	135
Pastoral Letter of the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception—1855	136
Has a Roman Catholic a Right to Read the Bible without Asking the Priest's Leave?	138
Trial of the Rev. Vladimir Petcherine on a Charge of Bible Burning	139
The Attorney-General's Speech	140
Mr. Thomas O'Hagan, Q. C. do.	140
Offer to the Roman Catholic Priests	141
CORRESPONDENCE:	
On Bible Burning—by X. A.	141
Pious Birds	141
Some More Words on Purgatory—by Dan Carthy	142
On Cluricaunes and Fairies	143
Printing Operations for December	143

SAVONAROLA.

WE are informed by travellers in Persia, that the following strange and remarkable phenomenon is occasionally beheld in those regions. Some time before day-break, the eastern horizon presents all the usual symptoms of the near approach of dawn. Faint streaks of light are seen in that part of the sky, which gradually increase in brilliancy, and the inexperienced traveller imagines that night is at an end, and that the day, whose arrival he has, perhaps, long wished for, is at length about to break. Soon, however, the light fades away, and is succeeded by a darkness like that of midnight, which seems the more intense from its contrast with the momentary splendour which preceded it. To this phenomenon is given the name of the false dawn.

It has often seemed to us that the foregoing circumstance furnishes no unsuitable emblem of the fate of those isolated reformers, of whom we occasionally read in history, who have lived *before their time*. When the world has long groaned under some system of tyranny and corruption, men of loftier spirits, full of warning and zeal, from time to time make their appearance, and raise their voice against the evils of the age. Such men, after diffusing a momentary light among their own contemporaries, have sometimes been suddenly removed by death at an early age, leaving behind them but little trace of their existence; and the minds of those who read the chequered narrative of their lives are impressed with a feeling of despondency and regret, that, owing to untoward circumstances, such great talents and energies have been lost to the world, which, under happier auspices, might have raised their possessors to a high place among the illustrious benefactors of mankind.

The remarkable individual whose name we have placed at the head of this article—Girolamo Savonarola—appears, from all that we know of his history, to have been a man such as we have just described. Had he lived about twenty years later than he did, we see much reason to believe that his ardent zeal for the cause of truth and holiness would have led him to co-operate with the great German reformer, Martin Luther, in the important work of the Reformation. But in the days of Savonarola, the minds of men, at least in Italy, were not yet ripe for such a change; and all the efforts which he made to produce an impression upon his countrymen, and to stir them up for a vigorous effort for Church reform, ended in disappointment, and brought Savonarola himself to a cruel and untimely end. Such men, however, do not live in vain. We feel convinced that no person whose own heart is animated by a sincere love of truth, can fail to leave *some* impression behind him. If he labours earnestly and diligently for the spiritual good of others, his exertions, sooner or later, will lead to salutary results, although not always, perhaps, in the way which we should expect. The motives of Savonarola have, indeed, been called in question, and his sincerity impugned, by various writers, both in ancient and modern times. We are far from asserting

that he was a faultless character, or that his conduct was in all respects worthy of imitation, but we fully believe him to have been sincere in his labours for the good of his countrymen; and, as the events of his chequered career were so strange and tragical, we trust the following brief account of them will not prove unacceptable to our readers.

Girolamo Savonarola was born at Ferrara, in the year 1452, and was admitted a friar of the Dominican order, at Bologna, when he was of the age of twenty-two. His Superiors at first employed him to teach metaphysics and natural philosophy; but at length he grew weary of this avocation, and applied himself entirely to the reading of pious books, and especially the Holy Scriptures. In the year 1489, he removed to Florence, where he soon acquired great fame as a powerful and convincing preacher. Florence at that time was governed by Lorenzo de' Medici, the father of Pope Leo X.; and the dissolute morals of both court and people, and their utter disregard for religion, must have awakened no ordinary feelings in the breast of a zealous and ardent man like Savonarola.

It would be impossible, consistently with our usual limits, to give our readers any idea of the lamentable state of morals and religion in Italy during the latter half of the fifteenth century. We will content ourselves with citing the unimpeachable testimony of Cardinal Bellarmine. "Some years before the rise of the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresy, according to the testimony of those who were then alive, there was an almost entire abandonment of equity in the ecclesiastical judgments; in morals, no discipline; in sacred literature, no erudition; in divine things, no reverence; *religion was almost extinct.*"* However the advocates of the Papal cause may endeavour to excuse and palliate this fearful state of things, the fact itself remains on record, that vice and irreligion rose to an unprecedented height at a time when the Pope and clergy of the Church of Rome had uncontrolled sway; and that, so far from checking those things, they themselves set an example of every kind of enormity. In a recent number of the able Roman Catholic periodical, the "Dublin Review," the writer of an eloquent article on the life of Savonarola makes the following remarkable statement on this subject:—

"The time in which he (Savonarola) lived, was such as to task the strongest intellect and the firmest will; well might he strive to look forward to the future for light, when the present closed so dark around. Well might he turn to read and expound with ardent longing the prophecies which told of the Church's never-failing life and perpetual renovation, when he saw so many of her ministers around him, *sunk in vice, and simony enthroned on the chair of Peter.*"†

The two Pontiffs who occupied the Papal chair in the time of Savonarola, and one of whom is alluded to in the last paragraph of the foregoing extract, were Sixtus IV. and Alexander VI. In former numbers of this journal, we have made some remarks on the characters of these two men;† and the facts of their history must have been indeed notorious, to have wrung such a sentence of condemnation from the pen of a Roman Catholic writer as that which we have just quoted. Sixtus IV., has been charged with unnatural crimes; and it is recorded that he devised a new mode of replenishing the sacred treasury—namely, the establishment of brothels in Rome! It would be superfluous to say a word about Pope Alexander VI. A Romish historian was obliged to combine three of the most atrocious monsters to be found in the annals of pagan Rome, in order to obtain any thing like a parallel to the enormities of this man. Nero, Caligula, and Heliogabalus must be united, in order to shadow forth the character of— if it may be said without impiety—this vicar of Christ. His next successor but one, Julius II., scarcely, if at all, fell short of his wickedness. Perjury, poisoning, assassination, drunkenness, unnatural crime, were laid to his charge. He was, moreover, a ferocious and merciless soldier. It was a saying of those times, that the earth drank in more blood in a single day, shed through his means, than he himself and his fellow-revellers had drunk wine during his whole pontificate. Such were the characters of the men who occupied the papal chair, and were the infallible depositions

of the Roman Catholic faith, at the close of the fifteenth century!

It is with much reluctance that we have cited some of the foregoing particulars; but when Roman Catholic controversialists attack the conduct of the Reformers, and impugn the sincerity of their motives, we are compelled to open the pages of *their own* historians, and to point out to them there the scenes of iniquity perpetrated at the very time of the Reformation, by the supreme rulers of their Church, which claims to be *exclusively* holy and infallible. Without some knowledge of the facts to which we have alluded, it would be impossible for the ordinary reader to form any notion of the fearful torrent of vice and immorality, which Savonarola, alone and almost unaided, undertook to stem. Nothing, as it appears to us, but the greatest singleness of purpose, and the most undaunted courage, could have induced him to commence so arduous and almost hopeless a task.

The success of Savonarola's efforts at reform in Florence however, soon became visible to all men. The mass of the people were aroused from their sloth and sensuality, and flocked in crowds to the Church of St. Mark, which soon became unable to contain the multitudes that were drawn together by the fame of the preacher. The writers of that time have left on record statements with regard to the wonderful results of his eloquence, which might almost seem exaggerated, if their testimony was not so clear and unanimous. "He thundered," says one writer, "against the dissolute morals of the age with such marvellous eloquence and such great success that he bent the minds of his auditors whithersoever he desired, and infused a zeal for piety and religion even into the most abandoned breasts. All Italy seemed to hang upon the mouth of the speaker."* The times of the ancient prophets, according to another writer, seemed to have returned, and Jonah's preaching to the people of Nineveh, recorded in holy Scripture, was the only fitting counterpart of that of the Dominican monk. "The stories that are told of the Christian eloquence of Savonarola," saith he, "might seem strange and incredible if they were not borne out by his writings. . . . He not only recalled the people of Florence to a more sober and modest course of life, but even stirred up among them a spirit of mourning like that of the Ninevites, from which circumstance the name of "mourners" was given to them."† The name *Piagnoni*, or "Weepers," which is here alluded to, and which was commonly given to the followers of Savonarola, is the best proof of the influence wielded by this remarkable man over the susceptible minds of his countrymen, and of the success of his efforts for their improvement. So high was his character for piety and zeal, that Lorenzo de' Medici, although personally hostile to Savonarola, received him when he was on his death-bed, in 1492, and asked for his benediction.

It soon became manifest to the earnest mind of Savonarola that the greatest enemies and obstacles to a reform in morals and religion were the bishops and clergy of the Church of Rome. He saw plainly, that if any permanent improvement among the people was to be effected, the whole system of that Church must be thoroughly reformed. John Picus Mirandola, the friend and biographer of Savonarola, and who was intimately acquainted with his opinions, draws the following melancholy picture of the state of the Romish Church at that time, and assigns this as the chief cause which stirred up the Florentine reformer to take the course which he subsequently pursued. "The Popes were openly accused of having obtained the Papedom by craft and stratagem, perfidy and simony, so that scarcely any one could be found who doubted the truth of the assertion. It was likewise alleged that when they had obtained the Papal chair, their time was occupied with harlots and impure men, and the heaping up of gold; and, moreover, that the Cardinals and Bishops who were under them followed their example. Among them there was not even the most moderate regard paid to the worship of God or religion; nay, it was even alleged that some of them did not worship God at all, and uttered contemptuous and reproachful sayings regarding our holy faith. Many of those priests, moreover, who had adopted a religious life, and professed

* In solutos seculi mores detotare cepit, tanta eloquentia, tam felici successu usus, ut audientium animos quo vellet persuasos flecteret . . . adeo ut tota Italia a dicentis ore pendere videretur. Jo. Fr. Picus Mirandola in vita ejus apud Cave, vol. ii, p. 198. Basilii 1741.

† Vincentius Baronius, Apol. Ord. Præd. Tqm. 2, p. p. 230, 231.

* Bellarm. Opera. Concio xxviii. Tom. vi., p. 296. Colon., 1617

† Dublin Review, Sept. 1854, p. 214.

‡ Vide CATHOLIC LAYMAN, November, 1853, p. 123; May, 1854, p. 58.

the usual rules, by degrees glided into hypocrisy.* What an awful account of the state of a Church calling itself Christian, and claiming to be the sole and exclusive depository of faith and morals! Popes, bishops, cardinals, priests, monks, stained with simony, avarice, sensuality, hypocrisy, infidelity! Well may we ask, where were the people to look for religious truth, when such was the fearful condition of those who claimed to be their divinely appointed guides to heaven!

The Romish advocates assert, however, that all these evils did not invalidate or destroy the infallibility to which their Church lays claim, and that this was admitted even by the Florentine reformer himself. "It is here well to observe (writes the Dublin reviewer) that Savonarola never disputed the authority of the Church in morals as well as in faith, and of the Pope as its head." We will not now stop to inquire what authority a man like Pope Alexander VI., whose life was stained by every enormity, might be supposed to have either in *morals* or *faith*. We will simply ask one question. How, or by whom, was the authority of the Church to be exercised, or its voice made known, in the days of Savonarola? If Pope, bishops, cardinals, and all were alike corrupt, as the foregoing extracts would lead us to believe, it is repugnant alike to common sense and to Scripture to suppose that any wholesome precept or sound doctrine could proceed from the lips of such teachers. Was *faith* to be learned from prelates who sneered and scoffed at Christianity? Were sound *morals* to be taught by bishops and cardinals whose chosen companions were harlots and abandoned men?

We fully admit that Savonarola himself may have been loth to abandon the idea of the infallibility of the Church, which he had imbibed from his earliest years. It is a hard task for any man to uproot from his mind those inward convictions which have grown with his growth, and which form the basis of his belief. We know how slowly and gradually the truth dawned on Luther's mind; and it is no wonder that the case should have been the same with Savonarola. We will make some remarks on his religious opinions before we conclude. At present we will content ourselves with observing, that the man who could write, as he did, to the princes of Christendom in 1496, urging them "to save the Church which was tottering to its fall; for that from the sole of her foot to the crown of her head there was no soundness in her, and that the very abomination of desolation stood in the Holy place"†—the man who could write *thus*, could not, we think, have formed a very exalted notion of the authority of the Church either in faith or morals.

But the career of Savonarola was now drawing to a close. The monks and clergy, irritated by his frequent denunciations of their vices and hypocrisy, brought their complaints to Pope Alexander VI. We quote again from the friend and biographer of the Reformer:—"The most bitter persecutors of Savonarola were the men of depraved morals, and chiefly the prelates of the Church, the villainess of whose lives had filled the world with the stench of their vices. He inveighed against their lust and avarice, their luxury and simoniacal guilt, preaching both publicly and privately that men should fly from Babylon (that is to say, Rome), because some malignant demon had made it the cess-pool of every kind of wickedness."‡

The Pope, by no means displeased, perhaps, at the opportunity of silencing a man whose zeal and virtues put his own scandalous conduct to the blush, first summoned Savonarola before him, who, not unnaturally, refused to put himself in the power of a man so notoriously unscrupulous as Alexander VI. After some delay, the Pontiff issued a letter to the Superior of the Dominican Order, directing him to enquire into the guilt of Savonarola, and meanwhile suspending him from preaching. Savonarola obeyed for a time; but at length, on Feb. 11, 1498, he resumed his accustomed place in the pulpit of the Church of Sta Maria del Fiore. The grounds which he alleged for this decisive step were these:—In the first place, that the Pope having been elected by simony, his authority was invalid; secondly, that the Pope's sentence being manifestly founded on misrepresentation might be considered as null; and thirdly (in a sermon on the text, "We must obey God rather than man,"—Acts iv. 29), he urged that "on all occasions where it can be obviously seen that the commands of superiors are contrary to the commandments of God, and especially the pre-

cepts of charity, none should obey in such a case." A man who could urge such reasons as these was plainly an advocate for the liberty of private judgment; and those of our readers who are familiar with Luther's early history will be able to trace many points of resemblance between his conduct, shortly before his final rupture with the Papal See, and that of Savonarola.

The result of such open rebellion against the authority of the Pope was obvious. A bull of excommunication was thundered forth from the Vatican. Florence became divided into two great parties—the *Pignoni*, or "weepers," who were the friends of Savonarola, and the *Arrabiati*, who were his enemies. The Franciscan monks, who were jealous of the fame and popularity of the Dominican orator, sided with the latter, and in them Alexander VI. found his most able and active auxiliaries. Strange, indeed, it is, that when such facts are recorded in the page of history, the advocates of Rome can yet pride themselves upon the *unity* of their Church, and claim this attribute as one of her distinctive marks!

The Dominican party published seven theses, or propositions, the principal of which were—1. That the Church of God wants a reformation. 3. That it will be reformed. 7. The excommunication of Savonarola is null, and that those who pay no regard to it do not sin.* A Minorite friar of the Franciscan order, Francis of Apulia, declaimed against these theses in his sermons, and offered to maintain that they were heretical. He was seconded by his brethren, as Savonarola was by his; so that there arose a great dissension between the two orders. The Dominicans declared that they would prove the truth of their theses before an unsuspected judge, and they chose *fire* as such a judge. And then there ensued a contest which is, perhaps, unparalleled in the history of the world.

The Franciscans having accepted the ordeal of fire, Dominic de Pescia, one of the most ardent followers of Savonarola, signed a writing, by which he engaged to enter the fire with the Minorite friar who had preached against the theses, and declared that he hoped to come out from the midst of the flames safe and sound. The Minorite friar declared that he was ready to dispute with Savonarola, and that another Minorite friar would enter the fire with Dominic de Pescia! "I am certain of perishing," said he; "but Christian charity teaches me not to withhold my life, if, on sacrificing it, I might precipitate into hell an heresiarch, who has already drawn into it so many souls."† It was thought strange that Savonarola did not accept the challenge of the Franciscan; but he justified himself by saying, that it was not worth his while to enter the fire with a single Franciscan; but that if his enemies, especially those who resided at Rome, would expose themselves to the fire, he would accompany them into it.

Enthusiasm spread beyond the two convents; many priests and seculars, and even women and children, more especially on the side of Savonarola, earnestly requested to be allowed to enter the fire. On the morning of the first Sunday in April, almost all the hearers of Savonarola, in the Church of St. Mark, shouted aloud with great fervour, "Here I am, sir; I will enter into the fire for your glory."‡ The magistrates of Florence consented that two monks only, Dominic de Pescia, and Francis of Apulia, should devote themselves for their respective orders, and directed the pile to be prepared.

On the 7th of April, 1498, a scaffold, dreadful to look at, was erected in the public square of Florence; two piles of large pieces of wood, mixed with faggots and brooms, which would quickly take fire, extended each eighty feet long. Every window was full; every roof covered with spectators; almost the whole population of the republic was collected around the place. The Dominicans arrived at their station in the portico called the Loggia de Lanzi, chanting canticles. Some persons suspected that one or the other of the friars, or perhaps both, had concealed some charm under their gowns, and they were therefore ordered to pull off their clothes and take others. The Minorite friar agreed to this, and even offered to enter into the fire quite naked. The Dominican protested that he would not enter the fire without a crucifix. This was granted him likewise, at the desire of the Minorite friar, who observed that the crucifix was of wood, and so, instead of being a preservative against the fire, it would be burnt with the Dominican. The latter then demanded a new favour, that he might be allowed to enter the fire with the holy sacrament. The Franciscans immediately declared that they would not permit the host to be carried amid flames. The dispute upon this point grew warm. Several hours passed away. The multitude, which had waited long, and began to feel hunger and thirst, lost patience; a deluge of rain suddenly fell upon the city; and the piles were so wet that they could no longer be lighted; and the crowd separated with a feeling of disappointment that they had lost the miracle they had so impatiently looked for.

The enemies of Savonarola took courage. On the day but one after (April 9) his convent was besieged by the *Arrabiati*, eager to profit by the inconstancy of the multitude; he was arrested, with his two friends Dominic de Pescia and Silvestro Marruffi, and sent to prison. A criminal prosecution was commenced against them; Alexander VI.

despatched judges from Rome, with orders to condemn the accused to death. We cannot afford space to dwell on the mock trial that ensued—the tortures inflicted on Savonarola seven different times—the falsification of the answers of the accused by the notary Ceccone, and all the other steps of this unjust process. Savonarola was too weak to support the torture; he appears to have avowed in his agony all that his enemies imputed to him; and, with his two disciples, was condemned to death. The three monks were burnt on the 23rd of May, 1498, in the same square where, six weeks before, a pile had been raised to prepare them a triumph.

Such was the tragical end of this remarkable man, at the comparatively early age of 46. In the above account of the circumstances which led to his death, we have intentionally abstained from embarrassing our narrative with allusions to the political and other charges which were brought against him. The impartial Roman Catholic historian, Natalis Alexander, has briefly, but emphatically summed up the whole case in the following words:—"Savonarola was persecuted by Alexander VI., and condemned by an unjust anathema."* We see but little reason to discredit the confession which Savonarola himself made on this subject during his imprisonment. After denying the calumnies which were alleged against him, he averred "that the predictions which he had delivered were not founded upon any divine inspiration, but were the results of his own observation, and the study of Holy Scripture; that his object was not to obtain any ecclesiastical dignity or promotion for himself, but that he earnestly desired that a council of the whole Christian world should be called, by whose authority and decrees the clergy might be reformed, and the state of the Church might be restored, as far as possible, to the purity of Apostolic times."† Such were the objects which he professed, and, we believe, sincerely professed, to have in view. No one, after reading the foregoing account of the state of the Church at that time, can question the necessity of the reform which he advocated. Had his efforts been crowned with success,—had the rulers of the Romish Church been gifted with the most ordinary prudence, the Reformation might have been averted, or, at least, delayed. But the Pope and his advisers were blind to the signs of the times. The very men who professed to be infallible could not or would not see that the whole Papal system was held in detestation by all who had any regard for religion. The cup of Rome's abuses was full. The profligate sale of indulgences by Leo X. was the last drop which made it overflow.

It remains to add a few words upon the peculiar religious views held by Savonarola. In many points his opinions seem to have been in accordance with what are considered the orthodox tenets of the Roman Catholic Church—for example, with regard to the Sacrifice of the Mass, the doctrine of seven sacraments, prayers for the dead, and some others. On the other hand, it appears certain that the study of Scripture, to which, as we have seen, he was devoted from an early age, induced him to reject many of the doctrines of Romanism, fully as important as those just enumerated; nay, perhaps more important, as bearing more directly on the Gospel message of salvation for perishing sinners. He decried human traditions; he owned no salvation but by free, gratuitous justification through faith in Christ, on which alone he relied, without admitting any other merit; he maintained the communion in both kinds; he denounced indulgences; and, as well with respect to life as doctrine, he owned that Antichrist was in the Court of Rome.‡ The evening before his execution, in the gloom of his prison-house, and in the full prospect of a cruel and ignominious death, he composed Meditations on the 31st and 50th Psalms, in the most glowing language, and full of the deepest spirituality of mind; and in these Meditations he dwells especially on the doctrine of gratuitous justification.§ It was of course to be expected that books containing such doctrines as these should be condemned by the Court of Rome, and put in the index of prohibited books. On the whole, we are much more inclined to wonder that Savonarola, alone and unsupported, with all the influence of education and early prejudice to struggle against, should have arrived at sound Scriptural views on the important points we have just indicated, than to feel any surprise that he should still have clung to the Romish doctrines which we have noticed above. And it will ever remain a disgrace to the Church of Rome, that a man so highly and deservedly admired for his exalted learning, severe morals, probity, and incredible eloquence, should have been brought to a cruel and untimely end, in order to gratify the malice of a rival monkish order, and the hostility of a wicked and unscrupulous Pope.

* "Ab Alexandro VI. vexatus, et injusto anathemate confixus." Nat. Alex. Hist. Tom. xv., p. 366. Paris, 1744

† "Se illud summopere expetivisse, ut totius Christiani nominis conciliium convocaretur, cuius auctoritate ac decretis clerus reformaretur, et ecclesie status ad Apostolicorum temporum puritatem, quam maxime fieri posset, revocaretur."—Nat. Alex. Hist. ut supra, p. 356.

‡ Traditiones humanas, quantum potest, evertit. In gratuita justificatione per fidem in Christo spem omnem suam collocat. Passionis Christi afflixus hæret. Unum Christi meritum agnoscit; Communionem sub utraque specie tænet; in indulgentias detonat; et porro se vitam sepe doctrinam intuearis, anti-Christum in Curia Romana regnantem quasi indignat. —Plessis du Mornay, Mysterium Iniquitatis, p. 602. Salmurii, 1611.

§ Inter ipsos carceris horrores, et imminenti supplicii angustias meditationes edidit in Psalmos xxxi. et l., vivis verbis, animatis sententiis, et spiritu fervore magnissima. —Nat. Alex. Hist. ut supra.

* Pontifices summo astu, et dolo, necnon simoniacæ perfidiæ supremæ aucupari sacerdotium dicebantur, sicut ut nec quisquam id re revocaret in dubium. Mox adeptos solum scortis et cincedis os auroque concervando vacare, fama circumferrebat, atque ad eorum exemplum qui suberant Cardinales et Episcopi sese instituerunt. Nullus in eis vel modicus Dei cultus, eis eadem vivendi ratio, nullaque religio. Quin etiam ferebatur, eorum aliquos Deum non colere, et in fidei nostræ contumeliam et contumeliam pleraque spargere. Sed et iures eorum, qui religiose vitæ addicti, et traditis regulis profitebantur, ad hypocrisis dilabebantur. Jo. F. Picius Mirandola, Vita Savonarolæ, p. 112. London, 1681.

† Scriptis ab Christianis principibus literis, zelum ipsorum ac pietatem excitare ut ecclesie labanti succurrerent, in qua a planta pedis usque ad verticem capitis nihil sani esset; et abominationem desolationis stantem in loco sancto.—Nat. Alex. Hist. Eccles., vol. xv., p. 355. Paris, 1744.

‡ Inter omnes vero persecutores Hieronymi hi acerrimi inventi sunt, qui moribus pessimis et potissimum Ecclesie præsidēs, quorum vita foedissima universum orbem fœtore replerant. . . . Illorum bidinem avaritiamque, illorum luxum simoniacasque vitas insectabantur, publice privatimque monere solitis a Babylonem (Roman intelligens) fugiendum esse, quoniam . . . malignus dæmon . . . ipsam sagittarum omnium sentinam cloacamque effecisset.—J. F. Picius Mirandola ut supra, p. 118.

* Excerpta ex Diario Burchardi. P. 46. Hanov., 1696.

† "Benchio creta ardere, ma per salute dell' anime son molto contento che io ardi."—Burchard p. 4, ut supra.

‡ "Gridando ciascuno, ecco io, ecco io, andaro in questo fuoco per gloria tua, Signore."—Burchard, p. 5.

We conclude in the words of the eloquent Padre Marchese—"But though his enemies destroyed his body, they could not destroy his memory, which has been honourably recorded by every writer who does not shrink from stating truth. For more than two centuries, on the anniversary of his death, the ground that drank his blood was covered with garlands; and this fact attests the veneration in which Savonarola was held, and proved that his precepts did not perish from the memory of the Florentines.*"

HISTORY OF PURGATORY.

(Continued from page 98)

The existence of a purgatorial state in which departed souls were long and fearfully tormented, was urged upon the people's belief more earnestly and perseveringly than almost any other dogma of the church during the middle ages. The reason of this is obvious: not only did this doctrine increase the reverence with which the priests were regarded, on account of the vast influence which they were supposed to possess in that region, but still more on account of the great pecuniary emolument which it afforded them. From the time of Gregory I., at least, it was constantly believed that the torments of purgatory could be eased and abridged by the suffrages of the living; and chiefly by prayers, alms, and masses. The prayers were always performed by the clergy; the alms denoted money contributed to the church, and none but priests could perform mass. Thus, to inculcate the belief and dread of the flames of purgatory was the most direct way to fill the coffers of the Church, and most vigorously was the work effected. Century after century sermons were preached, books were written, visions were related, miracles invented, and every effort made by interested men to inspire mankind with the most alarming terrors respecting this fictitious place of woe. Nor can we wonder, that in a dark and superstitious age, the picture drawn of the torments of purgatory should inspire the people with overwhelming apprehensions. "To be nailed to the ground foot and hand; to be led by their torments to eat the ground; to be cast into cauldrons of burning metal, some up to the loins, others up to the breast," was surely enough to alarm the stoutest heart. All fear of hell was supplanted by the dread of purgatory, and the great concern of a sinner, under the influence of Roman teaching, was not to flee from the wrath to come, but to escape from the purgatorial fire.

The natural effect of all this was to drive men to those means which, as they were taught, were infallibly connected with the more speedy release or entire freedom from the tormenting flames. In the words of an old writer—

"The new doctrine and invention of purgatory, bred by superstition and nursed by covetousness, as it was managed, became a most forcible engine continually to drain the people's money: For, when men were made to believe that after death their souls should enter into a region of fire, there to suffer long and bitter torments, to be purged and fitted for the region of bliss, but yet to be eased there, and the sooner released, according to the measure and number of the masses, offices, and prayers, which should be made on their behalf here, while they lay broiling in that fearful state; people were put upon it to make the best provision they could in their lifetime, or at least at their deaths, that such helps and means should be used on their behalf as they might reasonably reckon upon a short and tolerable continuance there. . . . To this purpose, the founding and endowing of monasteries, abbeyes, and nunneries, by the best and richer sort; and the colleges, free chapels, and chantries, by the middle sort of people, according to their respective abilities, and the apprehensions they had of this future state, all pointed at the good of the founder's soul, after death, and the souls of such others as he appointed."

"But yet, not trusting to the uncertain charity of others, most persons strained to the utmost, and many most excessively, their fortunes considered, to leave some provision behind for that purpose, and most commonly by their last wills and testaments, which were accounted sacred; and thereby, or by acts executed in their lifetime, it was not rare for many men, though they had many children to provide for, or many debts to pay, to postpone all relations and considerations to this concern of the soul; and to appoint, and to take order for masses satisfactory, anniversaries, obits, requiems, vigils, placebos, trentals, lamps, lights, and other offices, to be performed daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly, as far as the sums destined would afford, for the ease and comfort of the testator's soul."

These were not the only means of deliverance from the purgatorial flame. Indulgences were rendered available to souls in purgatory. It is only since the year 1300—the commencement of the Romish jubilees—that these Papal impostures extended their influence even to the dead. Ecclesiastical historians attest the rapid progress of this superstition. In less than a century it spread everywhere, and at length the monks did not hesitate to say that they saw the souls leave purgatory the moment that the people purchased from them the indulgences for the dead.†

Alexander VI., in the Constitution for the Jubilee of 1500, it is well known, offered to all the penitent faithful who were willing to give alms for the repair of St. Peter's, a plenary indulgence, by virtue of which they could deliver from the fire of purgatory the souls of their parents, their friends, or other faithful Christians,

on whose behalf they had contributed money. The words of the bull itself are given in Raynald.* Since the time of Alexander VI., the following Popes have extended indulgences to souls in purgatory in their jubilee bulls—Clement VII., Julius III., and Gregory XIII.

Without speaking of plenary indulgences and those for the article of death, which have the necessary effect of conducting the soul immediately to paradise, which gains them; it is well known that there are an innumerable number of indulgences for the dead, both in the city of Rome, and the rest of the Roman Catholic world. Besides, the popes have granted them to many confraternities of regulars and seculars. They participate in all the prerogatives of the indulgences attached to the stations of Rome, where souls are delivered from purgatory. The Bull of *Crusado* places the Spaniards and Portuguese in a position to deliver an infinite number. It is even proved from a calculation made, that as, according to the bull, there are nine days in the year in which every one of the faithful, from the age of seven years and upwards, is able to draw a soul out of purgatory: the Spaniards alone might have sufficed, and more than that, to have delivered from Purgatory the souls of all the Roman Catholics who have died in the faith and in charity, from the very establishment of Christianity.† The Bull of Adrian VI. in favour of the Portuguese obtained the same advantage for them.

To these kinds of indulgences for the dead, must be added also those which are attached to privileged altars.‡ There are few churches which have not privileged altars attached to them, either in perpetuity, or, what is more common, for seven years, and to which the popes grant that the priest, who on certain days shall celebrate there a mass for the dead, shall deliver a soul from purgatorial flames; so that as the Jesuit Santarel has agreed, it would be easy in one day to deliver all the souls in purgatory.¶

The frivolous conditions attached to certain indulgences of the dead deserve our notice. According to Thiers, the Carmelites pretend to have received from John XXII. a bull which they call the Sabbatine Bull, which promises to whoever shall belong to this order, and wear the habit called the scapular, a plenary indulgence, with the promise of being at once delivered from purgatory. The Blessed Virgin is then introduced, saying—"I, the mother of grace, will descend the first Saturday after the death of all those who shall wear my habit, and who for the love of me have entered into my order, or my confraternity, or my society, and who have lived worthily in this life; I will deliver them from the pains of purgatory, and I will gloriously conduct them to the holy mountain of eternal life."¶ Other privileges, referring to souls in purgatory, belonging to the girle of St. Augustine and of St. Monica, are mentioned by the same writer.**

A still more extraordinary means of delivering souls from purgatorial fires belongs, or did belong, to another order of monks in the Church of Rome. According to a distinguished Romish writer—"The friars minors had once, they have it still in the present day, a very easy means of delivering souls from purgatory; for they declare that this may be accomplished as many times as a person enters and passes out of the church of our Lady of Portiuncula, from the first vespers of the first day of August until

* Ad an. 1499, n. 27.

† Les *Tares de l'Innoc. Rom.* Edit. de France, 1744, pp. 70, 74.

‡ PRIVILEGED ALTARS. *Inscription on a marble slab in the Chapel of St. Mary and St. Francis, in the Church of St. Lorenzo, in Lucina.*

¶ Gregory the XIII. Pope. As a perpetual memorial of the thing. Bearing the stead, though unworthy, and following the example of our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, who for the redemption of the human race, deigned to descend from the highest throne of heaven to the abyss of this world, and to assume our flesh from the Virgin's womb; we study to afford to the souls of Christ's faithful dead existing in purgatory—who, in charity united to God, have departed this life, and have deserved to be assisted by the suffrages of the pious—opportune assistance from the treasures of the church; so that, as far as it shall please divine goodness, they may be more able to reach their heavenly country. Conceiving, therefore, that the divine mercy, and led to it by prayers on the part of our beloved son, Luigi Franca de Ferraris, Master of the ceremonies of our chapel, humbly offered to us for this purpose by the tenor of these presents we grant in perpetuity that as often as at the altar under the protection of the blessed Mary of grace, and of St. Francis, situated in the Church of St. Lawrence, in Lucina of the city, any priest, secular or regular, shall, of his own or of another's will, celebrate a mass for the liberation of one soul existing in purgatory, the same soul shall, from the treasury of the church, the merits of the same our Lord Jesus Christ, and all his saints, obtain the same indulgences, and remission of sins by the acceptance of divine clemency, and the said mass shall operate for the liberation of the same for which it shall be celebrated, as it would have obtained, and as it would have operated, if the said priest should for this cause celebrate a mass for the dead, at the altar situated in the church of St. Gregory of the city, deputed for that purpose. Ours concerning the not conceding indulgences, for a like purpose, *ad instar* and other apostolic constitutions, and ordinances, and whatsoever other things to the contrary notwithstanding. Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, under the ring of the Fisherman, the 24th day of April, 1578. In the sixth year of our Pontificate. — *Ce Genesius.*

On one side of the altar in the church of St. Maria della Pace, we find the following—"Every mass celebrated at this altar liberates a soul from purgatory."

Over the entrance to the tombs in the church of St. Lorenzo fuori le mura—"This is the tomb most celebrated in the whole world of the cemetery of St. Cynia, a matron, where if any one shall perform the sacred rite for the dead, will evoke their souls from the pains of purgatory through the merit of the divine Lawrence." [A great number of inscriptions of a similar nature may be seen in Percy's *Romanism*, &c., pp. 1-3, and.]

§ Thiers iii., c. xciii., p. 313.

¶ *De Jubil.*, c. 3, d. 12, apud Thiers, *ibidem*

¶ Thiers ubi sup. cxvi., p. 2. See this Bull in the *Speculum Carmelitanum*, Antwerp, 1680, 543 and 549.

** *Ibid.*, p. 286.

the second vespers of the following day; so that for another entry and departure out of the church one does not deliver more than one." This is stated by Cardinal Boniface di Vitalinis in his "Commentary on the Clementine Constitutions." It was confirmed by Honorius III., and by various bulls and briefs of the successors of Honorius. The actual words of the writers of this order are given by Thiers.*

The popes have never dared to say that they had any knowledge of the particular state of every soul after this life; they never ventured to decide positively; "these go to heaven, these depart to hell, these others remain in purgatory." How could they know? and in this ignorance what certainty can their indulgences for the dead possess? Granting the case that God has condemned a soul to one hundred years of purification in this middle state, is it not natural to believe that it will remain there one hundred years? Who can deliver it? The Pope! Is he able then to exalt himself above God?† To absolve those whom God has condemned? To mitigate or commute the punishment denounced on sinners by the decrees of his justice?‡

It now remains to give some particulars respecting the modern history of purgatory, and the superstitions connected with that unscriptural dogma. It is unnecessary to say that the Council of Trent—the modern standard of Romanism—openly declared its truth, and anathematized any one who entertained any doubt on the subject. The following is the decree of the council, passed at its twenty-fifth session:—"Since the Catholic Church, instructed by scripture and the ancient tradition of the fathers, hath taught in sacred councils, and most recently in this general council, that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, especially by the sacrifice of the altar, the holy council enjoins the bishops to take diligent care that the sound doctrine on the subject of purgatory, taught by the holy fathers and sacred councils, be believed by the faithful, be held, taught, and everywhere preached." After prohibiting difficult and subtle questions, and also such as are of doubtful character, the decree proceeds as follows:—"Let those things which tend to mere curiosity or superstition, or savour of filthy lucre, be prohibited as scandalous and offensive to Christians. Let the bishops take care that the suffrages of the living faithful—viz., masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which the faithful have been accustomed to perform for departed believers, be piously and religiously rendered according to the institutions of the church, and whatever services are due to the dead, let them not be performed slightly, but diligently and carefully."

The advice here given, with reference to the manifold evils arising from the doctrine, might just as well have been spared. It is utterly irrational and absurd to suppose that an order of men entrusted with an engine of such tremendous power, could abstain from using it for selfish purposes. And such, indeed, has proved the case. The monstrous abuses springing out of this dogma, and the practices connected therewith, have increased rather than diminished since the Council of Trent.

The fathers of that Synod have exercised a very discreet prudence in the amount of information which they have thought proper to give respecting purgatory. They simply state the fact that there is a purgatory; and that the souls detained there are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. We are compelled, therefore, to go to the doctors of the church in order to ascertain, more particularly, the notions prevalent among Romanists in modern times on this important subject.

One of the most able and learned champions of the Romish Church was Cardinal Bellarmine. His writings have been repeatedly quoted by English Roman Catholics, as authority for explaining what the doctrines of that Church are; and from them we give the following extracts, as illustrating the sentiments entertained respecting purgatory, subsequently to the sitting of the Tridentine Synod. At the commencement of his "Treatise on Purgatory," the Cardinal defines it to be "a certain place where, as in a prison, those souls are purified after this life, which were not purified here, in order that they may be able to enter into heaven." "It is appointed," he says, "for those who die with *venial* sins, and again, for those with the temporary punishment of sin undischarged, though the sins themselves have been remitted." He describes the pains of purgatory as most horrible (*atrocissima*), exceeding, beyond all comparison, any sufferings upon earth, according to the uniform doctrine of the fathers. He says, also, that "the belief of purgatory is an article of faith, so that they who do not believe it shall never arrive there, but must be tormented in the eternal fire of hell."§

"Since many persons," says Bellarmine, "will not believe what they have never seen, it has pleased God sometimes to raise his servants from the dead, and to send them to announce to the living what they have really beheld."

* Thiers iii., cap. xvii., p. 259.

† *Ibid.*, chap. ii., 4.

‡ John IV., of Portugal, died loaded with relics and plenary indulgences, and yet in spite of these indulgences, he had scarcely breathed his last, when prayers were at once commenced for the repose of his soul before privileged altars. Still more, 20,000 ducats were distributed by his orders in the poorest convents of the kingdom, to cause 100,000 masses (neither more nor less) to be said, with all speed, for the same object; and, as though these 100,000 masses were not sufficient, they hastened to establish, in the monastery where the king was buried, four masses to be said each day, for ever, for the peace of his soul, and its deliverance from purgatory.

§ *De Purg.*, cxv.

* *Dublin Review*, ut supra, p. 216.

† *Rom. Horsebeck.* Lond. 1769.

‡ *Kocher. Hist. de la Ref. de la Suisse*, i., pp. 38, 39.